A brief history of the Ständehaus

The Ständehaus was built between 1901 and 1906 by Paul Wallot and is thus the most recent building on Dresden’s famous riverside skyline. The old House of Finance (Finanzhaus), the Charonisches Haus and the Brühl Palace (Brühlsche Palais) were demolished in order to make way for the monumental new Renaissance-style building erected to house the Landtag.

The building, with its restrained architectural features, is built on a trapezoid site and is very formal in its structure. It has a nine-axis frontage facing the Schloßplatz, with a massive three-axis central forepart. On top of the tower is a golden statue of “Saxonia”, which was made in 1905 by Johannes Schilling. The building itself is a heavy brick structure, the outer walls being clad in the “best Saxon white weather-proof material”, sandstone. The interior was designed by Otto Gußmann, Wilhelm Kreis and Richard Riemerschmid.

During the construction phase there were sometimes a dozen painters and an equal number of sculptors working on it. The art work was largely destroyed by fire on 13 February 1945. Some Baroque figures, such as two wall fountains and four sandstone sculptures (“Wisdom”, “Vigilance”, “Flora” and “Meleager”), originate from the Brühl Palace and were made in about 1750 by Lorenzo Matielli. The two wall fountains are now located at the side of the vestibule in the entrance hall, and the sculptures “Wisdom” and “Vigilance” are in the entrance vestibule of the tower on the Brühl Terrace side.

The Ständehaus served its designated purpose for only 26 years. On 14 October 1907 the first session of the Saxon Landtag took place in the building. Following the last session on 21 February 1933 the doors closed on the parliamentary system. Although the building was severely damaged in the second world war, the Saxon State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments moved into some of its rooms immediately after the war in 1945 and began gradually removing the rubble, thus laying the basis for its present domicile in the attic of the building. In 1994, the Saxon State Government decided to make the building the location of the Higher Regional Court (Oberlandesgericht) and also to establish representative chambers for the President of the Saxon State Parliament (Landtag) in it as a reminder of the building’s original parliamentary function.

The reconstruction and alteration work took place between 1996 and 2001. The architectural focus was set in the Courtroom Cube, which contains 7 court rooms and was constructed on separate foundations as a “building within a building” on the site of the former grand plenary hall, which was destroyed in the war. On the site of the small Landtag hall, a new Grand Hall has been built on the 2nd floor as a banqueting hall for all three users of the building. It is dominated by bright red discs on the walls, decorated with silver stainless steel figures made by the artists Angela Hampel and Gudrun Trendafilov. Both artists have created more artwork in the room opposite, the Landtag common room, i.e. a stencilled frieze that extends around the room. 

The coloured glass window in the foyer named “Law and Order” was made by Marion Hempel. The architects have succeeded in demonstrating respect for Wallot in the remaining parts of the original building and at the same time in creating modern working conditions suitable for its intended purpose today by paying attention to the use of light and carefully selecting the building materials.

Regular art exhibitions take place in the Forum of the Higher Regional Court (Oberlandesgericht) Dresden (ground floor).

Opening times: Mon – Fri 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.